Lyndon's Big Brotherly Election in Saigon, Pps. 2-3

Triumph of Democracy, Like the Charge of the Light Brigade, Theirs Not to Reason Why

"A voting official in Xuanluc (where 80 percent of those registered voted), the capital of Longkhahn Province, a largely Catholic area 50 miles north of Saigon, told a reporter he doubted that more than 20 percent of the villagers knew what they were doing. But they were doing it."

—*Ward Just from Saigon in* Washington Post, *Sept. 12*

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Why They Cry Black Power

There is a hopeful side to the riots and picketing in the slums. They indicate that the poor are no longer poor in spirit. This is the spark that hope has kindled, the real achievement of the poverty program, the beginning of rehabilitation. The negative side is the spread of race war. The Negro, the Puerto Rican and the Mexican-American will no longer wait humbly at the back door of our society. For them its shiny affirmation of equality is a taunt. Either we make it real or see our country torn apart. A race is on between the constructive capacity of our society and an ugly white backlash with Fascist overtones. The crossroads of America's future is not far off.

The Curse of Mankind

Our country is the last hope of multiracialism. The French, for all their civilizing gift, were unable to create that multiracial community Ho Chi Minh was once willing to enter. The British Commonwealth is splitting up over British unwillingness to act against the dictatorship of white minorities in Rhodesia and South Africa. Racialism and tribalism are the curse of mankind, anachronistic contemporaries of the astronaut. Where white supremacy is gone forever, Arab and Negro slaughter each other in the Sudan; Malay and Chinese riot in Singapore; tribalism is breaking up Black Africa's most promising nation in Nigeria.

Racism here is only another example of a universal human disease. The cry of "black power" is less a program than an incantation to deal with the crippling effects of white supremacy. The "black" affirms a lost racial pride and the "power" the virility of which the Negro has been robbed by generations of humiliation. Its swift spread testifies to the deep feelings it satisfies. It is not practical politics; it is psychological therapy. Stokeley Carmichael's burning explanation of it in the Sept. 22 issue of *The New York Review* is to be read as the poetry of despair. The United States is not Mr. Carmichael's cherished model, Lowndes County; there are few other counties which have its overwhelming black majority. And it is typical New Left *narodnik* mysticism, albeit in Negro form, to call for "the coming together of black people" to pick their own representatives and at the same time to reject "most of the black politicians we see around the country today." Who picked Adam Clayton Powell, Harlem's absentee political landlord?

But rational argument will not meet the appeal of "black power." It affirms separation because it has met rejection. When Senators go out on the golf links to forestall a quorum rather than vote on "open occupancy," when hateful faces in the North greet Negro demonstrators with cries of "kill the jungle bunnies," when whites flee the cities as if the Negro were some kind of rodent, how else salvage pride except by counter-rejection? It is the taking of white supremacy for granted that is the danger, not the cry of "black power," which is as pathetic as a locked-out child's agony. Nothing could be more disastrous than to divert attention from the real problems of our society by setting off on a witch hunt against SNCC. In Atlanta, as in Watts, trouble began not because of SNCC (see its own account on p. 4) but because the cops are trigger-happy when dealing with black men.

Without extremists to prod us into action, we will not take the giant steps required to rehabilitate the colored and the poor. The Negro still wants in; he cannot go back to Africa; his only future is here. Not black power or white but a sense of belonging to one human family can alone save this planet. But the time is short before hate shuts the doors. The time is coming when we will regret the billions wasted in Vietnam. The time is coming when we may regret the number of Negroes we have trained there in guerrilla war. There is hardly a city where the Negroes do not already dominate the strategic areas through which the affluent commuter passes on his way to the inner core. SNCC's hostility to the war is not disloyalty but wisdom. We cannot rebuild that sense of community so essential to our beloved country's future by engaging in a white man's war in Asia while a black man's revolt rises at home.

Why the Pentagon Is to Salvage Negroes

"Secretary McNamara's plan to draft and train hundreds of thousands of young men now unqualified for military service was spawned by military necessity, despite all the hoopla about the war on poverty. The plan is primarily designed to maintain an adequate manpower pool—which has been cut nearly in half by a year's beefed up draft for the Viet Nam war. The reserve of men available for military duty has shrunk from more than 2,000,000 in midsummer 1965 to just over 1,000,000 as of July 31, 1966 . . . Some 30 percent of the McNamara draftees will be Negroes as against an average Negro draft rate of 10 to 11 percent."

—*Washington Sunday Star, Sept. 11.*

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A Military Junta Rigs An Election Plain Enough for All to See . . .

The military junta which rules South Vietnam promised to suspend censorship and allow freedom of the press during the 15-day election campaign for a Constituent Assembly. That promise was not kept. How do you have a free election without a free press? I have yet to see a single editorial in any of the major Eastern seaboard newspapers I read which even mentioned, much less protested, this broken promise. I found only three U.S. correspondents who mentioned the fact, though even then only in passing.*

Saigon's Editors Had An Excuse

The South Vietnamese press could plead that it did not tell the truth because it was censored; I saw blank spots on page 1 of the *Saigon Post* which attested efforts to report what the censor would not permit. The U.S. press had no such excuse for the mass exercise in brain-washing in which it so enthusiastically engaged. Though a careful study of the papers (see samples below), enabled any intelligent reader to see the truth, the dispatches themselves did their best to bury it in a mass of speculative sophistry designed to confuse the unwary. The editorial writers and the commentators, with some few exceptions, outdid themselves in solemn mendacity.

An election in which the military junta decided who could run, what he could say, and how long and where he could talk was hailed by David Lawrence (Sept. 13) "as a unique expression of a free people in exercising their right of self-determination." Unique, it certainly was. A campaign in which neither the war nor the inflation nor military rule could be discussed was called by the *Washington Post* (Sept. 13) "a vindication of the political awareness of the rank-and-file of the people." Under a vigilant dictatorship the man who

Is That Constitution Already Written?

Last June 13 we reported that Prof. John P. Roche was in Saigon where he had been sent by Johnson (as the Washington Post confirmed in White House sources) to help the South Vietnamese write their new Constitution. He is now back to start work at the White House as replacement for Prof. Eric F. Goldman, LBJ's disillusioned Gauleiter for the intellectuals. The Washington Star Sept. 9 said Roche "went to Vietnam for the President to examine that country's constitutional structure." But the Assembly which is supposed to give South Vietnam a constitutional structure to replace its military dictatorship has not yet begun its work. What, and with whom, was Prof. Roche studying? Under the rules established by the military junta, it can substitute its own draft for any Constitution the Assembly produces. The Assembly can overrule the military only by a two-thirds vote "in open ballot." (Wall St. Journal, Aug. 26). Now the London Observer's man in Saigon, Mark Frankland, reports (Sept. 11) that Ky has "made it embarrassingly clear in the last few days" what kind of Constitution he wants and adds in a parenthesis, "the draft already exists." Is that what Roche did in Saigon? Has South Vietnam's new Constitution already been written for it in advance by a Founding Father Lyndon Johnson so thoughtfully supplied?

*** Ralph H. Kennan, Baltimore Sun, Sept. 5, reported that candidates were complaining of press censorship. Charles Mohr, New York Times, Sept. 10, wrote "Buddhist attempts to disrupt the election are hampered by an increase in the stringency of press censorship," a prime example of propagandistic phraseology. Richard Critchfield, Washington Star, Sept. 11, reported, "The promised lifting of press censorship never really materialized."**

Some Insights from the Saigon Dispatches Into The Realities of That Election

"Most ordinary Vietnamese assume they had better vote to 'avoid trouble' in future official dealings."

—*Richard Critchfield in* Washington Star, *Sept. 3*

"There still can be no criticism of the regime—at least not directly. How can a candidate campaign?"

—*An unnamed "veteran of Vietnamese politics" quoted by Ralph H. Kennan in the* Baltimore Sun, *Sept. 5.*

"There is no evidence, and likely to be none, that the campaign will generate a true national debate over the conduct and duration of the war. The time period is too short, the interest in the election too shallow, the restrictions both real and psychological, too many."

—*Ward Just in* Washington Post, *Sept. 4*

"In the 2d Military Corps area, commanded by Gen. Vinh Luc, a recent directive instructed local police, army officers and other functionaries to take opponents of the election into custody. The directive also recommended the initiation of a whispering campaign designed to spread the word that non-voters could find themselves in trouble."

—*Stanley Karnow in* Washington Post, *Sept. 11*

"The formal opening of Saigon's constituent assembly election campaign was postponed tonight. The officially announced reason was rain. The real reason was voter apathy. Perhaps a half dozen voters showed up . . . 'There simply is no interest,' a candidate said."

—*Ralph H. Kennan in* Baltimore Sun, *Aug. 29*

"In two weeks of campaigning, the candidates have not discussed the war, how to win it or how to negotiate its end . . . More than a few hundred people seldom show up at a meeting and often almost no one shows up."

—*Charles Mohr from Saigon in* New York Times, *Sept. 8*

Nothing So Reconciles Us to Democracy As Having A Military Dictatorship to Fall Back On

"Some elderly and respected Southern politicians now openly tell American newsmen they favor some sort of negotiated settlement with Southerners among the Vietcong, something almost unthinkable a year ago."

—*Alarmed dispatch from Saigon,* Wash Star, *Sept. 11*

"This election could lead to a government determined to end the war through negotiations and to 'invite the Americans out', which is why the idea of holding elections originally caused shudders at the American Embassy. This possibility, however, seems extremely remote. This is true if only because any government flirting with neutralist tendencies would know that it was risking an almost certain coup d'etat by the Army."

—*Chas. Mohr from Saigon,* New York Times, *Sept. 11*

"I do not care who is Premier," the fisherman said with obvious inner enjoyment. "I have no mind about Saigon. If the Premier wants me to vote, okay. I will do my duty and go voting. One hears those who do not vote may be menaced by the police."

—*Interview by Critchfield from Tuyen Duc in the Mekong delta,* Washington Star, *September 7.*

"Literature, both content and amount, is controlled—as much to control uniformity of spending as for censorship."

—*Ward Just in* Washington Post, *Aug. 27*

"There are no real issues in this election."

—*Robert Keatley in the* Wall Street Journal, *Aug. 27*

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. . . and the American Press Hails It As A Triumph of Democracy!

wrote those words would be arrested on a charge of poking fun at the government.

A Helpless Herd

There never has been a more expertly rigged affair. By forbidding party slates, the military (and the CIA election experts we no doubt lend-leased them) made sure that the Assembly would be an unorganized mass, easy to control. The main fall-back lies in the rules which will allow the military to substitute their own draft for any Constitution the Assembly writes. Yet even the *New York Times,* which has been so admirably critical, collapsed into wide-eyed imbecility and said (Sept. 13) the Saigon junta "now has an enhanced and legitimate status of its own as a national entity." That must have been written way out yonder on one of those LSD sugar cubes.

No one questioned the junta's figures on how many registered voters voted. No one asked how reliable such figures could be where there were no opposition watchers, where the military and the provincial chiefs were free to report any figures they pleased. Hardly an election passes in this country without some charges of fraudulent count, but the tally from Saigon was swallowed without a gulp.

Postscript to Last Week's Issue

"Any thoroughgoing Senate inquiry into the Thailand situation must ask how so clever and sweeping a resolution as the Tonkin Bay resolution came to be trotted out so swiftly . . . It would be interesting to know whether the resolution had actually been drafted before the events in Tonkin Bay."

***—Our issue last week on* The Hidden History of the Coming War on Thailand.**

"Usually, his (Johnson's) timing is precisely his own —as when he presented his Vietnam resolution to Congress the day after the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. He had been carrying it around in his pocket for weeks waiting for the moment."

—Tom Wicker, Washington Bureau chief, the* New York Times *in an* Esquire *article on LBJ, Nov. 1965.

A wary White House played it cool for two days, perhaps unable to believe the press would prove so exuberantly gullible. Then Johnson topped the chorus by declaring the Vietnamese elections "gave us a lasting lesson in democracy." (*Wash. Post,* Sept. 14). We hope Johnson wasn't serious. We'd hate to think of what our own elections could become if he started taking lessons from Ky.

What Chen Yi Actually Said to Visiting Japanese Diet Members in Peking

*Because of their importance and because certain key phrases here emphasized have been omitted or glossed over in U.S. reporting, we thought readers would like to see for themselves exactly what China's Foreign Minister Chen Yi told a visiting Liberal-Democratic party (i.e. conservative) delegation from Japan Sept. 6 as reported in Japan. Chen Yi also stressed China's desire for peaceful co-existence with Japan saying, "We believe in socialism but other countries should decide socialism, capitalism, or revisionism to their own liking. We do not like to have ideas forced on us, and also we do not like to force our ideas on others" (*Mainichi, *Sept. 7).*

"Q. There are many people in Japan who fear a possible military clash between the U.S. and China. We want to improve relations between Peking and Washington. Japan has no intention of militarily attacking China, and we do not think that the U.S. would wage a war with China.

"A. We do not think that the U.S. would *immediately* wage a war with us, or that the present Sino-American tension will last for a long time. We have no intention to provoke a war with the U.S. If we make such a provocation, we would lose the support of world public opinion, and without the support of world public opinion we would never succeed. The answer to this question is up to the United States.

"It is wrong to consider that China has no intention of having talks with the U.S., and the two countries will continue negotiations at Warsaw at the ambassadorial level. *A settlement of questions through talks is China's basic policy.* If this were not true, the Warsaw talks would have been suspended long ago.

"The solution of the Vietnam issue must be decided by the Vietnamese people and not by China. A peace conference is impossible *at the present stage* when the U.S. is using force. The U.S. said that its military forces would be increased to 750,000 by next Fall and to 1,000,000 by the end of next year. Until the U.S. forces withdraw from Vietnam, negotiations are impossible. If the U.S. withdraws, the issue could be settled by the Vietnamese themselves.

"The main aim of the present cultural revolution is to consolidate the domestic structure in preparation for the worst situation. China does not think that a Sino-American conflict will eventually take place. China has no intention to wage war with the U.S. because China does not consider that the U.S. would stage a war with China.

"It is impossible to say that the worst situation will not happen. In preparation for such a case, China must solidify its domestic structure to prevent the appearance of another Wang Chao-ming who betrayed China to Japan.

"The second aim is to prevent a tendency in which revisionism is born and leads to capitalism, as is seen in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and some East European countries. In order to prevent such a tendency, a new culture must be created by increasing production and improving techniques. This is the cultural revolution and there is a long way to go before achieving that. The present movements by the Red Guards are correct. *This does not mean however that every demand by the Red Guards will be taken up as a national policy.* The government has a right to decide its policy. *China's foreign policy will not be changed by the cultural revolution."*

—"Gist of the questions and answers" in Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi's talk Sept. 6 with Japanese parliamentarians as printed next day in the Tokyo daily Mainichi.

Chen Yi on Tokyo TV

"I do not think that the present tense situation between the U.S. and China will last forever. But the problem lies in the attitude of the United States. If the U.S. should invade China, China would rise up to defend itself. CHINA SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF SINO-U.S. TALKS ON THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAM DISPUTE.

"The activities of the Red Guards are correct . . . THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IS BEING CARRIED OUT TO STRENGTHEN THE DOMESTIC CHINESE SYSTEM IN PREPARATION FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. AGGRESSION AGAINST CHINA."

—On Tokyo TV Sept. 6

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SNCC's Version of What Sparked The Racial Outbreaks in Atlanta

We thought our readers would like to see SNCC's version of what sparked the Atlanta riots. Marion Barry of SNCC's Washington office gave the following account to the press Sept. 8 on his return from Atlanta where he was attending a SNCC workshop when the first outbreak occurred Sept. 6:

At approximately 1:15 p.m. two white policemen stopped a car driven by Harold Prather, a 25-year old Negro, who lived ¾ of a block away. The cops stopped Prather at Capitol avenue and Ormond st. According to 15 or 20 persons who witnessed the incident, Prather jumped from the car and ran and was shot three times by one of the white officers. "Prather kept moving at a very slow speed and was fired upon again as he tried to get to his home ¾ of a block away," said one witness. He finally made it and fell on the porch.

Immediately after the shooting, a crowd of 150 to 200 persons gathered at Prather's house to protest the shooting. There were no SNCC people present. Stokeley Carmichael, SNCC chairman, returning from a radio interview heard about the incident over the radio and went to the scene. The people there were very angry. The local people wanted Carmichael to come back and help organize a peaceful protest demonstration. It was called for 4 p.m.

Witnesses Asked to Speak

At approximately 3:30 p.m. two SNCC people arrived at Capitol Ave. and Ormond St., the scene of the demonstration; 200 people were there. The local people had made their own signs and gone around in the various neighborhoods informing their friends as to what had happened. At 3:45 p.m. Bill Ware, project director for SNCC's Atlanta Project, and three other SNCC people arrived with a sound truck. Ware asked the assembled people what had happened and they began to tell him. Ware said the whole group should know what had happened and asked if witnesses would tell about the incident over the public address system.

Several persons began telling what they had seen. Police officers immediately moved in and told Ware to turn off the P.A. system. Ware informed the policemen that he wanted to stop rumors and make sure that everyone knew what had happened. The policemen immediately arrested Ware. Another SNCC worker asked if people still wanted to talk. The local people said "yes." The talking continued and police arrested the SNCC person. This made the crowd angrier. They demanded that police release the two SNCC people. The local people said that they would sit in the streets until the two persons were released and the Mayor suspended the policeman who shot Prather.

The policemen tried to remove people and arrested some who lived in the neighborhood. The arrests were immediately protested by the crowd, but to no avail. The people really got angry and started pushing some of the officers and several bottles were thrown. Mayor Ivan Allen arrived on the scene and brought with him 150-200 white policemen and an armored truck loaded with white cops, machine guns and other riot equipment. White officers with shotguns were stationed all along the street.

At that time Mayor Allen tried to lead the crowd to the Atlanta stadium some 4 or 5 blocks away. The crowd refused to leave their neighborhood. The crowd was also angry because all of the white officers had machine guns and shotguns, but the Negro officers had only their pistols. This really set the crowd off. Bottles, bricks and other objects were thrown at the white officers.

What the Protesters Wanted

Allen tried to talk to the people from atop a police car but they would not listen because the crowd wanted one of their leaders to talk and not Allen. The block leader who got on top of the car demanded that 1) white cops get out of there with machine guns and shotguns, 2) the release of all those illegally and unjustly arrested, and 3) the cops be fired who shot the young Negro. The crowd cheered the demands but Allen refused to answer. He refused to address himself to their grievances, at which time he was toppled from the police car. Then 50 to 60 cops rushed into the crowd and started hitting and pushing people. Mayor Allen then directed that tear gas be used to disperse the 1500 people who were on the scene. "Tear gas them or tear those houses down," Allen shouted.

All 400 to 500 officers began firing their pistols and shotguns without warning, both in the air and at the crowd. It was a terrifying experience. Unarmed people were assaulted by officers armed with tear gas, pistols, machine guns and shotguns. Never seen anything like it. Little kids, 7 or 8 years old were hit with tear gas cannisters. Black women were clubbed to the ground. Anyone who was not moving fast enough was immediately arrested and thrown head first in the paddy wagon. Cops fired tear gas indiscriminately into the homes of Black people who were not even on the street. Little kids came out gasping for air. Cops went onto Black people's porches to beat and arrest them. During this period, several police cars were stoned, and several policemen were injured. During all of this, the attack was directed by Mayor Ivan Allen. He ordered little kids tear-gassed. He ordered white cops to beat and arrest black people.

SNCC's Role in the Outbreak

Now as to SNCC's role: 1) SNCC has only one project in Atlanta and that is in an area called Vine City which is on the other side of the town from the disorders. 2) SNCC has never worked in the neighborhood where the disorders took place. 3) It was the shooting of the young Negro by the white cops, then subsequent arrests of SNCC people that made people angry. 4) The local people themselves made the signs and got their friends together. 5) Stokeley Carmichael drove through the area only after the disorders began. 6) Most of the SNCC people arrived on the scene after the crowd had gathered and police were beating people. 7) The focus should be on Mayor Allen and his racist cops and not SNCC. At 11 a.m. that day SNCC members had gone to the Mayor's office with a complaint concerning police officials. At this time Mayor Allen refused to speak with the group and dismissed them by stating, "You're out of line in Atlanta which is known for its fair and equal treatment of all citizens."

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